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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the uses and misuses of alternative education programs for disruptive youth. It discusses their potential for assisting students who are unsuccessful in conventional school programs and points out their limitations and dangers. The paper describes the positive and negative aspects of existing alternative schools. It reviews what research indicates about the impact of alternatives, indicates lacunae in existing research, and suggests areas for further study. Four alternative programs are presented in detail. In a concluding section, the paper discusses a set of conditions that contribute to the success of alternative programs. (Author)

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ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS FOR DISRUPTIVE YOUTH

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Over the past eight years a growing number of school districts across the country have established special programs and schools designated as "alternatives." Explanations for the emergence of alternatives within public school systems are widely divergent.[1] The alternatives have been characterized as expressions of a new responsiveness to the diversity of American society; as stop gap measures to preserve a faltering system of public education; as devices to meet the needs and realize the potential of individual students; and as means to resolve, minimize, or avoid conflict over pressing social issues such as busing for the purpose of desegregation.[2] The lack of consensus is attributable not only to the differing purposes and perspectives of educational policy makers and writers, but to the ambiguity of the term itself. The result has been a wide range of programs subsumed under the rubric "alternative."* Substantial differences exist among school districts in the definition and scope of alternatives. A school system might provide a few alternatives, many, or a comprehensive range of options. There are approaches aimed at the total school-age population of a district, and there are approaches that are designed to serve only special subgroups within that population.

Generally speaking, those in the forefront of the alternative education movement advocate a system of public school options which would provide a choice among distinctive learning environments to all students, their parents and teachers.[3] In practice, however, alternatives most frequently serve two types of students—those who are intellectually gifted and/or artistically talented, and those whose school experiences are characterized by failure.

In this paper we examine the subset of alternatives designed for students who do not succeed in conventional schools and who are disruptive. While in conventional schools, these students not only fail to learn but also act out their frustrations and resentments and impede the learning of other students. They have been described by the prefix "dis"—disenchanted, disaffected, disaffiliated, disturbed, and disruptive. Frequently they have been expelled or suspended; they are likely to be truant and eventually drop-out of school; many have already had contact with the juvenile justice system.

Programs for disruptive youth presently comprise about one-third of extant alternative programs in the United States.[4] These alternatives vary from part-time programs serving a few students within an existing school, to separate schools serving several hundred students. There are also cases of alternative programs existing in nontraditional locations, such as community health centers.[5]

This paper analyzes the uses and misuses of alternative education programs for disruptive youth. We discuss their potential for assisting students who are unsuccessful in existing school programs; and we point out the limitations and dangers of alternatives. The paper describes

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*See Appendix A for a listing of different types of alternatives.

the positive and negative aspects of existing alternative schools. We also review what research indicates about the impact of alternatives, point out lacunae in existing research and suggest areas for further study.

We base our commentary in this paper on a review of pertinent literature as well as field data. In the course of 1976, we travelled to the following school districts considered to be leaders in alternative education: Boston-Cambridge, Philadelphia, Houston, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Louisville, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Los Angeles, San Jose, Berkeley, and Seattle. One week was spent in each major site interviewing administators and school officials, teachers, students, and parents involved with alternative schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the origins, functioning, and outcomes of alternatives.*

Assumptions and Conceptual Framework

Our analysis is based on the assumption that a principal cause of student disruptive behavior is the learning environment of large, impersonal bureaucratic schools.** As presently constituted, conventional schools are settings in which a substantial number of students experience failure, feel powerless about the decisions that affect them, and have negative views about themselves and their futures. Student relations with school personnel—particularly in large comprehensive high schools—are often distant, if not antagonistic.

We share with Gold the theoretical perspective that disruptive behavior is an ego defense—a means of protecting an individual from a derogated self-image caused by failure in important social roles.[6] In the case of students, lack of competence in academic and other school roles may be compensated for by "acting-out" and attention-getting behaviors before an appreciative peer group, which provides an alternative system of rewards and status.[7] We also share with Hirschi the set of propositions that "the causal chain runs from academic incompetence to poor school performance to disliking school to rejection of the school's authority to the commission of delinquent acts."[8]

Friedenberg,[9] Kozol,[10] Kohl,[11] Silberman,[12] and others have documented the violence that the schooling process wreaks on the self-identity and

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*For further discussion of our research methodology, see Appendix B.

**Obviously, there are a variety of social forces operating on the students—family and community, peers, mass media, the character of American society itself—which are contributory factors to school violence. But our attention is on those aspects of schools which may generate disruptive behavior, and which are amenable to modification and correction through changes in educational policies and practices.

personal integrity of students—particularly from lower class and minority backgrounds. For a sizeable number of students, schooling represents a degrading experience which may cause them to strike back in anger against the institution, its agents (teachers and administrators), and its clients (students).

The reaction of a school system to student disruption may be ruthless and punitive, or it may be humane and rehabilitative. According to Maynard, school administrators and teachers use two basic approaches in dealing with violence, vandalism, and discipline: 1) force, and 2) improvement of school environment.[13] Maynard notes that where a staff has adopted the "school climate model"—which may result in student "ownership" of the school—there is an emphasis on the following:

- educational quality and individual self-worth;
- trust;
- open and honest communication;
- shared leadership;
- high involvement of staff and students;
- skills acquisition to accomplish the above.[14]

Similarly, Glasser advocates the structuring of learning environments where everyone can have a stake in the school and everyone can succeed.[15] We agree with Maynard and Glasser that changing school learning environments represents the most reasonable strategy to follow in attacking the causes of disruptive behavior.

Positive Features of Alternative Schools

Advocates of alternatives for disruptive students point out that they provide a supportive learning environment where such youths can gain basic academic and social skills, experience success and social approval, participate in important decision-making, feel good about themselves, and look forward to more attractive futures.. Features of alternative programs aimed at achieving these ends include small, intimate schools with a low student-adult ratio,, individualized instruction, competent and caring teachers, specialized personnel to provide counseling and social services, and a pragmatic vocational thrust. The following discussion will elaborate upon these points under the headings of conditions conducive to warm interpersonal relations, academic success, sense of power, positive images of the future, and enhancement of self-concept.

Conditions Conducive to Warm Interpersonal Relations

Size. The staffs of alternative schools invariably rate smallness of size (low enrollments) as perhaps the most important factor enabling them to reach and work with disaffected youth. Because of the smallness

of the programs, they are able to treat students more individually. The teachers generally know the students names, something about them, and when something is wrong. They are able to know when problems are likely to erupt.

The median size of alternative school populations is less than 200 students. Many have fewer than 100 students.[16] Small school size is usually accompanied by a low student-adult ratio. Alternative schools typically have student-adult ratios of approximately 15 to 1 and sometimes lower. This is accomplished through diversified staffing, use of student teachers, graduate interns, community volunteers, and parents. Robert Stark, former director of alternative education in Grand Rapids, believes that the low student-adult ratio may be the most significant aspect of alternative education.[17]

Researchers such as Jencks and Coleman, who have discounted school resources and classroom size as significant determinants of outcomes like academic achievement, have not themselves studied the impact of these predictor variables on the outcome variables of school violence and vandalism; nor have they studied the relationship between school factors and academic achievement for specific subpopulations characterized, not by socioeconomic status and race, but by disaffection and failure. McPartland and McDill, however, did analyze the data from the 1965 Coleman survey of equality of educational opportunity with such questions in mind. They examined school size in relationship to the reports of over 900 principals on the extent and seriousness of a wide range of student offenses. Their conclusions were these:

> In small schools, where few individuals are anonymous, it is hard to avoid being recognized for misdeeds. Higher visibility and closer personal associations in small schools also may . . . [help students] because the pressures and incentives are greater to become involved and committed to school activities. A student with greater integration into the life of the school is generally believed to find school more rewarding in terms of informal relationships and feelings of self-worth through responsibility.[18]

The following studies also are supportive of the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between small size and lower levels of violence. According to a task force report on California schools, "The incidence of vandalism, fighting and drug-alcohol offences in school was directly related to size of school."[19] In Violence in the Schools, Michel Berger reports that the sheer size of urban schools is a cause of violence and there is an "almost total lack of violence in alternative schools."[20] Similarly, Barker et al., in Big School, Small School, conclude that smaller schools, or well defined sub-units within larger schools, have high potential for reducing school crime.[21] While certainly more research is needed on school size, the smallness of alternatives

appears to be an important factor contributing to a reduction in vandalism, violence, and school disruption.

Stated more positively, small-scale schools with low student-adult ratios provide minimal, necessary conditions for more intimate interactions between teachers and learners. They are more conducive to a sense of community, where individual needs can be recognized and administered to more immediately.[22] The individual attention provided in such settings may also contribute to bolstering the self-esteem of students who are neglected in the larger, more impersonal, conventional school. In the alternative setting each student counts as a unique person.

Teachers. According to Cardinell, schools tend to have more vandalism problems when their teachers lack genuine interest in pupils.[23] Conversely, Goldman reports that good relationships among administrators, teachers, students, and others (including the school custodian) are associated with low levels of school vandalism.[24]

Without competent, committed, and caring teachers, small program size would count for little. The critical role of teachers is noted in the following studies:

Eight hundred students participating in five alternative education programs in Chicago were asked to evaluate positive and negative features of their previous schools and their present alternative schools. According to the study, conducted under the auspices of the United Charities, "The responses indicated that the single most negative feature in the school that truants came from was the teachers, and the single most important factor that the students like in the alternative school was the teachers" [emphasis in text].[25]

Similarly, students in the Dade County Alternative school program for disruptive youth were asked to evaluate the three worst features of the conventional schools they had been attending. The students responded, in order of frequency: "The people who run the school" (Principal, Assistant Principal)—50%; "the teachers"—46%; and "the other students"—38%.[26] When asked, "What is the one thing you like best about this alternative program?", 46% filled in answers such as "teachers and administrative staff don't hassle me." The next two most frequent responses were teachers (18%) and academic classes (17%).[27]

The Ahlstrom and Havighurst study of an alternative program, Four Hundred Losers: Delinquent Boys in High School, included a sentence completion test. According to the researchers, fifty percent of the boys expressed negative feelings toward their general school experiences in these terms: "I wish teachers . . . would understand me . . . would understand my ways . . . would know the whole story before judging . . . were not so bossy . . . would get lost . . . would stay home . . . would learn to keep their noses out of people's business . . . would drop dead . . . would be sick for a year."[28]

The East Unit of the Alternative Schools Project in suburban Philadelphia serves students who, while not disruptive, were dissatisfied in conventional school. Poor relationships between students and teachers were frequently mentioned as a reason for such dissatisfaction. According to one student:

> You walk in, they teach you, you walk out, and they never talk to you again. . . . Some of them cared about you, but mostly they cared about handing in their little lesson plans and getting paid.[29]

By contrast, the evaluation of East Unit notes that "Part of the reason why students feel positive about their courses here, it appears, is that they generally like their teachers. In fact for some of them, relationships with staff members are the most satisfying and important aspects of their lives at the school."[30] One of the 12 students selected for in-depth interviewing in the evaluation made this comment:

> If I were recommending the place to someone outside, I would tell him how the teachers at Alternative are not like the teachers where they came from, and how you can talk to them and have them be your friend, not just your teachers, but really be close to you.[31]

According to the evaluation of East Unit: "In some cases, kids say their teachers here are the first adults they have been able to relate to on a human level outside their families—and sadly, sometimes even inside their families. The burden on each individual staff member is tremendous. . . . "[32]

In Grand Rapids, students in alternative programs were surveyed to determine what they considered to be the most positive attributes of their programs. The most common responses were the following:

- Teachers treat students as people and with respect.
- Teachers establish warm, friendly, and even affectionate relationships with students.
- Teachers allow students freedom along with responsibility.
- Teachers create a casual, low pressure atmosphere.
- Teachers show a genuine interest in students.[33]

The Bowman study of the Quincy, Illinois revised school program for potential delinquents observed that a central feature of the alternative was that students spent one-half to three-fourths of their day with "one teacher who knows them well and was sympathetic to them."[34] The teachers, who were selected from the regular teaching staff to work in the alternative, did not have any special training: they were selected because of their interest in working with this kind of child.

In Four Hundred Losers, Ahlstrom and Havighurst note the following:

> A few conclusions from this study can be applied to the education of maladjusted boys, although they can hardly be guaranteed to solve the problem. One involves the importance of choosing the right kind of person to teach such boys. On the basis of our observations, as well as on theoretical grounds, we conclude that certain kinds of men and women were much better than just a random cross section of teachers. The teachers who worked best were patient but determined. They were flexible in teaching personality, able to adapt differently to different boys. Such teachers are not especially rare. We observed several who did work well with these boys.[35]

A study conducted in Grand Rapids by Baker compared differences in perceptions of instructional practices of 26 teachers and 35 students in alternative schools,* and 25 teachers and 51 students in conventional schools. According to Baker, the responses of both students and teachers indicate that alternative school teachers are more student-centered, that they are more likely to include students in planning, and to individualize and personalize their teaching. They also are less likely to lecture, lead discussions and recitation, and evaluate student progress by conventional testing and grading.[36] The generalizability of these findings is limited by the smallness of the sample and the nonrandom sampling procedures utilized in the study but they nevertheless are suggestive.

Teachers in alternative programs may also be more accepting of behavior which would be considered deviant and punishable in conventional schools. Soloman and Kendall conducted a study comparing teacher perceptions of misbehavior in traditional and open classrooms. They found a "difference in the definitions and latitude of socially acceptable behavior between the two types of classes." "Apparently," the researchers concluded, "some behaviors which were tolerated and possibly approved in open classes were seen as inappropriate in traditional classes. . . ."[37]

While it should be kept in mind that the Soloman and Kendall study was not directed at alternative programs, anecdotal evidence and descriptions of alternatives suggest that in many cases teachers may be more tolerant of certain behaviors—and willing to give students a second chance.

The following interview with a teacher at the Longfellow School in Louisville, Kentucky, illustrates this point:

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*The alternative schools included not only programs aimed at dropouts and potential dropouts but special programs for achieving students.

> Mrs. Clinton, who was with the old city district's alternative program for five years, said some of the students were sent to Longfellow for cursing teachers.
>
> "It might have been a real isolated incident where a student gets upset one time . . . where if someone (had) ever sat down with him and tried to work it out, he might not even have gotten put out."
>
> When students curse her, Mrs. Clifton said, "Most of the time they'll come back in a couple of hours and say, 'I'm sorry.'"[38]

Similarly, the Kennedy et al., description of the Woodward Day School, an alternative program for disruptive youth located at the Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, reports:

> Staff attitudes have changed. At the WDS's inception, teachers and others expected the students "to raise hell" and reacted quickly to misbehavior. Staff members are now more relaxed and able to ignore negative actions and reinforce positive ones.[39]

The designers of the program viewed the development of a trust relationship and the provision of social and emotional support as critical preconditions for learning.[40]

Ahlstrom and Havighurst note that school personnel in alternatives may have to tolerate behavior in the early stages of instruction that they would not tolerate later when their influence with the students has grown.[41] Duke and Perry found that teachers in 18 California public alternative schools, functioning as schools-within-a-school,* tended to view behavior problems as "opportunities to work on matters troubling students rather than problems per se."[42] Because teachers perceived inappropriate behavior in this way, they altered the conventional way in which faculty and students relate to each other. Instead of a controller of students, the teacher became a student advocate and consultant.

Teacher involvement in alternative programs is extremely time consuming, extending beyond the normal work day and work week. Staff are often on call, at school or at home, to assist students with academic, social, and personal problems—and not infrequently to offer their assistance to students when they have encounters with the law. The Massimo and Shore study of a comprehensive, vocationally-oriented psychotherapeutic program for dropouts highlights the importance of such involvement:

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*Although the alternatives studied by Duke and Perry were largely for white middle-class youths not characterized as problem students, the general teaching approach appears to be valid for alternatives established for disruptive youths.

"It is within the context of a relationship that can help him in any area of life at any time that the adolescent delinquent appears to be able to make his greatest gains."[43]

Whether or not there is a burn-out factor with staff in such programs is a question which has not been studied. Data are impressionistic. According to Kenneth Osvold, Director of the Career Study Centers in St. Paul (which he describes as "Educational Intensive Care Units"), "burn-out is a very real threat."[44] Unfortunately, he believes that this will increasingly be the case as "decreasing enrollments retard the entry of new personnel to a district's staff, and in fact cause transfers that may be economically rather than programmatically oriented."[45]

Conditions Conducive to Academic Success

For many students in alternative programs, conventional schooling has been a brutalizing experience characterized by continual failure and harassment. McPartland and McDill document how school systems, through their grading policies, create a class of "perpetual losers deprived of any taste of academic honor."[46] The researchers note that lack of school success, as measured by report card grades, is significantly related to the probability of student disciplinary problems. Gold, reviewing the literature on the correlates of delinquent behavior, reached these conclusions:

> . . . poor scholastic performance measured by school grades and standard achievement tests is related to low self-esteem measured by nonprojective and by projective means; and . . . poor scholastic performance is also related to disruptive, delinquent behavior in the school and in the community, whether that behavior is observed and rated by teachers or reported by the youngsters themselves. Furthermore, there is evidence that low self-esteem is associated with higher levels of delinquent behavior, and there is some indication that enhancing self-esteem will reduce that behavior.[47]

Through a variety of forms of instruction and evaluation it is possible to structure educational environments so that virtually all students can experience success. Cohen and Filipczak, in their study of the CASE project at the National Training School for Boys, described such a learning environment:

> The students in our project who had dropped out of school before being sentenced for their crimes had little or no academic success. By pretesting them and assigning them programmed instruction at a level at which they could per-

> form successfully, we guaranteed success for each individual on whatever level he began. Little by little each student, through this step-by-step process, found that he was able to achieve 90 percent accuracy or better in his test work. We did not lower the requirements of the academic work, just as we do not lower the requirements of life.[48]

Cohen and Filipczak describe how the experience of success contributes to further progress on the part of the learners:

> When one young man came to CASE in the early part of the program, he said that there was something wrong with him. He felt that he was a misfit and could not do anything well except the anti-social behaviors. . . . In less than one year's time, this youth learned to succeed. And when he started to succeed in academic subject matter after eight years in public school, where he had considered himself incapable and stupid, his whole approach to education and to life changed. He became a man who enjoyed the sweet smell of success. An important fact of life that all people have come to recognize is that success is one of the most powerful reinforcers for more activity, and for more success [emphasis in text].[49]

For Cohen and Filipczak, the work completed by the participants in the CASE program "clearly domonstrates that not the youngster but the public school system and its ecology have failed. The youngster is not mentally bankrupt but the public school and the system that sustain it are."[50] Although the CASE project pertains to an extreme population—41 incarcerated teenagers—Cohen and Filipczak believe that the principles and procedures used in the experiment have greater generalizability and possible application to education systems.[51] One implication of the study is that when students experience success, and begin to perceive themselves and their surroundings in a more positive way, aggressive behavior is likely to decrease.

Individualizing instruction. According to Gold, individualizing instruction is a key to increasing the proportion of success experiences over failures and facilitating warm interpersonal relations—two essential ingredients of effective alternative education.[52] In Quincy, Illinois, teachers in the alternative program for ninth grade potential dropouts carefully selected reading materials that would appeal to students' interests and also be at a level of complexity commensurate with student abilities. The objective was that all students would experience success.[53] In the Kansas City, Missouri work-study program for delinquent boys, Ahlstrom and Havighurst observed that among the best liked features of the alternative were the flexibility which accommodated the individual

needs and the grouping of boys of similar ability.[54] The alternative for delinquent adolescents described by Massimo and Shore involved a remedial education program tailored to individual needs and designed to give the youths skills to perform successfully at work.[55] The objective of this program of individually-prescribed instruction was to reduce failure experiences. In the Woodward Day School, the program designers emphasized the importance of individual attention, along with a controlled small environment, acceptance of the student, and improvement of the student's self-image.[56] Summarizing evaluations of 19 alternative schools, (one-third of them for troublesome students), Duke and Muzio write that teachers were praised by students for providing individualized attention.[57]

Alternatives for disruptive youth individualize instruction generally through use of programmed instruction, learning contracts, and point systems or token economies which reward students for desirable classroom behaviors and progress toward specified academic goals. These programmatic features permit students to progress at their own pace and to meet high school graduation requirements through successful performance on tests of competence. Descriptions of such individualized approaches can be found in Appendix C and in listings of alternative programs for Dade County,[58] Philadelphia,[59] Grand Rapids,[60] Los Angeles,[61] and Seattle.[62]

Matching learner with environment. Because alternative education implies providing students and parents with the opportunity to select a learning environment suited to the individual learner's needs and preferences, putatively there exists within a system of options a greater probability of all students achieving success. Kulka et al., in "School Crime as a Function of Person-Environment Fit," suggest that congruence between student and learning environment is likely to produce positive outcomes —"including increased sense of worth, well-being, and involvement as well as the absence of psychological strain and maladaptive behavior."[63] When students believe that an education program contributes to their self-respect and accords them status, they are less likely to do it violence.

Fizzell conducted a study of the characteristics of students who were succeeding in both conventional and alternative high school program in an affluent north-shore suburb of Chicago.[64] He also compared profiles of successful and unsuccessful students. Overall, he found fifty variables related to success in school and made the striking generalization that characteristics associated with success in one school are associated with failure in another. Fizzell, himself, was director of an alternative program in Niles Township, Illinois, which was suitable for students described as "loners," who feel comfortable working with adults, and prefer to work at an individual pace on topics of their own choosing —often outside the formal classroom setting.

Support services. Finally, diagnostic and support services constitute another important element in ensuring academic success. In many cases, the troublesome student is an individual with some visual, auditory, or

motor-skill handicap. The student may have medical problems which impede learning. A study of 444 students in the custody of the Colorado Division of Youth Services in 1972, showed that 90% of them had learning and perceptual disabilities, which had not been dealt with adequately.[65] At Black Jr. High School in Houston, counselors opt to send a student offender to the Student Referral Center, housed in a temporary building on the school's campus, where the student receives intensive counseling, testing, and assistance from a variety of youth service agencies. It is estimated that 79% of the students who come to the center have serious learning disabilities.[66] Career Study Centers in St. Paul have a social worker, a counselor, a vice-principal, and a half-time nurse as support service. According to the Director, "because our students often have a multitude of problems, adequate support personnel is vital to the program's operation."[67] Descriptions of a variety of counseling and diagnostic services provided students in alternative education programs are found in publications of the American Friends Service Committee[68] and the Children's Defense Fund.[69]

Conditions Conducive to a Sense of Power

A number of researchers view schools as alienating contexts where students are denied choice in critical areas of the learning process.[70] Spady, in a theoretical paper on the authority system of the school and student unrest, writes that students are cast in an involuntary school role where "they have little opportunity to define and seek the special help for their specific needs or to select the agencies (schools) and the agents (teachers) who might best serve them. . . ."[71] The State of Michigan Task Force to develop a comprehensive plan for juvenile justice service similarly notes that "this lack of student-family input into the administration of school programs often results in feelings of futility, distrust, and alienation. . . ."[72] Ahlstrom and Havighurst found that one of the critical problems facing delinquent students was a lack of a sense of control over the environment:

> Most of the boys saw the world around them as operating by chance or under the control of powerful people alien to them. This limited them in studying a situation, deciding how to act rationally and effectively, and then acting in the expectation that they would produce the desired effect.[73]

While research is far from conclusive, there is some indication that student involvement in decision-making has a positive effect on reducing student discipline problems, though the importance of this variable may be small compared to other factors. Duke, in a survey of administrators' (principals and assistant principals) views of the crisis in school discipline in New York and California, found that over 75% of the 74 New York and 69 California administrators who responded "have attempted to involve

students in developing rules governing their own behavior. . . . Most administrators reported that student involvement produces favorable results."[74] McPartland and McDill, in their study of crime in schools, reached this conclusion: "We have some evidence that school . . . [decision-making] involving either governing decisions' or consumer decisions can increase student commitment to the school and reduce student offenses against the school and staff. . . ."[75] The researchers found small but significant associations between the outcome variables of truancy and attitudes toward vandalism and protest, and the independent variables of satisfaction with participation in rule-making and with existing rules: the more satisfied the student, the lower the propensity to engage in disruptive behavior.[76] Epstein and McPartland, in a study of 16 middle and high schools, also found that greater student access to decisions "can have a small positive effect on their satisfaction with school, their commitment to classwork, and especially positive relationships with teachers."[77]

While none of the above studies focused on alternative schools, they did examine a characteristic often practiced in alternatives. Many alternative schools actively work to involve students in school decisions regarding curriculum policy and rules. While these alternatives are generally serving middle-class white individuals who have basic academic skills but are turned-off by conventional schools,* there are alternative schools for disaffected youth that definitely attempt to involve students in important decisions.[78] The NIE-funded external evaluation of East Campus, a continuation school in Berkeley, found this: "Field observations indicated that students were encouraged to address themselves to any problem they disagreed with whether it was school policy or any personal problem with teachers. Staff and students set goals for each student in both academic and personal adjustment."[79] The evaluators found that East Campus was one of the few schools in the district (including both experimental and conventional programs) where students gained in feelings of control over their environment.[80] And Kenneth Osvold of the Career Study Centers lists among the remedies to school violence "options for gaining power and its attendant responsibility."[81] Feelings of efficacy and conversely powerlessness are very much related to an individual's self-esteem and whether or not an individual is willing to work within a given social system or attempt to subvert it.

At the systemic level, alternative, ideally, means not only that students and families participate in school decision-making, but that they have a choice of a range of schools and learning programs. Perhaps, as the State of Michigan Task Force suggests, this element of choice in itself is conducive to a sense of power: "a wide range of alternative educational opportunities must be accessible to students, to provide the

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*The 1974 National Alternative Schools Program (NASP) Survey found that "representational multi-level consensus" alternatives, where decison-making is more extensively shared, are not found in predominantly minority populated schools.

student with some power to select and control his educational environment."[82]

Conditions Conducive to Positive Images of the Future

An important aspect of self-concept is the ability of individuals to project themselves into the future, to imagine, in concrete terms, attractive options available to them.[83] One key area of self-identity is the work roles an individual can envision performing in the future.[84] Stinchcombe's study of Rebellion in a High School, for example, found higher rates of deviant or rebellious delinquent behavior among working class youths who—because they were in nonacademic tracks or were females planning to marry young—were less likely to look forward to social mobility and promising careers.[85] Ahlstrom and Havighurst also indicate the importance of establishing orderly structures in which adolescents "could go to work with some assurance that what they learned in school would lead to a better life."[86]

Many education programs, serving as alternatives to suspension and exclusion, contain a career orientation and extensive opportunities for work. The component of work is considered one means of providing a sense of responsibility and dignity to the students. Work experience is also considered as a means of pre-job and on-the-job socialization in necessary social skills. The jobs help acquaint students with future job prospects and help integrate them into the marketplace. While many work experiences provide needed income for these students, other programs—for example, the Edison Project in Philadelphia—found that many students were willing to work even after federal funds providing stipends were terminated.

Independence High School, in the Ironbound Neighborhood of Newark, has had an impressive record of success with alienated working-class youth. Its work program is described this way: not as a "vocational training program, but rather an attempt to place students in job situations, for a month at a time, where they experience work discipline and job expectations in general as well as the nature of the specific job they may be contemplating after graduation. The work program often convinces students that they need to acquire additional skills or additional training. Each year the proportion of graduates choosing college or technical schools has risen."[87]

Another widely acclaimed alternative program, the Industrial Skills Center in Chicago, has been extremely successful in working with students who have been in trouble with the law. Over three-fourths of them are known to the courts or have served time in jail. After enrolling in the program, less than 10% of the students have any further contact with the law. According to the Children's Defense Fund, the students make substantial gains in academic achievement. And attendance is higher in the Center than the average either for Chicago's general

high schools or its vocational schools.[88]

The Stride Program (in Rockford, Illinois), like many alternatives for potential dropouts, offers a career orientation and extensive opportunities for work. As in other programs, the school day is shorter than that of the conventional schools. Students may concentrate on gaining basic academic skills half day, and are released for work the remainder of the day; or, typically in such programs, they may be granted several days off a week to work. In the 1976-77 evaluation of the program, students were asked questions about their perceptions of the future. The responses were these:[89]

"Before I started the program my future looked:"
a. 0 good b. 6 O.K. c. 16 bad

"Now my future looks:"
a. 16 good b. 6 O.K. c. 0 bad

Again, although the number of students in the program and sample is small, the findings are suggestive of the positive impact alternative programs can have on the images of the future of students who previously considered themselves losers. Successful academic and work experiences contribute to the self-respect of students and to their belief in playing a meaningful role in society.

Conditions Conducive to Enhancement of Self-Concept

A survey of the literature on juvenile delinquency, school discipline problems, and dropouts indicates that many of these students have feelings of low personal esteem and a negative self-concept. Gold, in his research on delinquency, has found provocative linkages between failure in the role of students, low self-esteem and anti-social behavior.[90]

It may be plausibly argued that one of the most promising approaches to remedying school vandalism and disruption is to improve students' self-concepts. Massimo and Shore, for example, found that delinquents enrolled in effective alternative education programs may improve first in self-image, next in control of aggression, and finally in attitudes towards authority.[91]

As preceding sections have suggested, many alternative programs—because they provide a supportive, accepting environment where students can succeed and experience a sense of control over their lives—are likely to enhance self-concepts. A survey of instructional goals would indicate a strong endorsement of affective objectives. The 1974 NASP study found that of the major domains of learning emphasized, 76% of the alternative schools responded that they stressed the affective area, 75% the cognitive area, and 60% the moral (in the sense of moral responsibility).[92]

In a review undertaken at Indiana University of over fifty alternative school evaluations—both internal and external, from every part of the country, and representing a range of different types of alternative schools—a recurring pattern emerged. Students generally experienced significant and often dramatic changes in the affective area. Among the most salient findings were these:

- The self-concept of alternative school students appears to improve, especially students who have not done well in conventional schools.
- Students tend to be happier in alternative schools and have better attitudes about school.
- Students seem to have an increased sense of control over their own destinies, feel more secure, and have a stronger self-identity.
- More positive attitudes tend to be demonstrated in higher attendance rates, lower suspension and disruption rates, and less vandalism and violence in schools.[93]

Negative Aspects

Despite the potential of public alternative schools to assist students who otherwise would be written off as failures by school and society, there are limits to the effectiveness of such programs. And despite the beneficial aspects of schools for disruptive students, there are also a number of deleterious practices and outcomes associated with them. The limiting and negative factors of these alternatives are the following: this disproportionate number of minority students enrolled in them with the attendant danger of racial isolation; the academic tracking which occurs when disruptive youths receive a minimal curriculum that prepares them for menial and deadend jobs; the lack of choice and the blatant social control which characterize some alternatives; and the fact that often too little is done too late for the most neglected students.

Ironically, a number of the positive features of alternative programs may also entail negative consequences. For example, in establishing special settings where the academic and personal needs of disruptive students can be addressed, a school system concomitantly creates a situation where students may be negatively labeled. Students may be able to achieve in such a setting, but at the cost of being socially perceived as losers. The placement of disruptive students in alternative programs tends to be substantially associated with the overall isolation and tracking of minority and low income students who are over-represented in the category of disruptive youths. (Similar issues surround the

mainstreaming or separation of special education students.) Another example of a potentially positive feature possibly leading to negative outcomes is the highly controlled environment of many alternatives. Tight staff control may facilitate the acquisition of basic skills and the positive reinforcement of socially acceptable behavior, but it also may severely curtail student choice and participation in school decision-making.

Labeling

According to Meyer, the socializing impact of a school is conditioned by the way schools and their products (graduates) are socially defined.[94] In his conceptual paper on the "charter," Meyer remarks that certain schools are socially defined as having the authority to confer elite status and diffuse competence on its graduates, while others are viewed as preparing individuals for very specific and limited social roles. Research by Arnove on student alienation suggests that warm interpersonal relations with teachers, and students satisfaction with their academic programs, are insufficient to develop student feelings of efficacy and optimism about the future—when they are enrolled in non-prestigious schools and study poorly-defined fields.[95] The important determinant of efficacy—as well as whether students were predisposed to engage in violent and anomic behavior in the political realm—was the perceived authority of schools to allocate individuals to high status roles in the society.

Alternative schools, unfortunately, are often perceived as "dumping grounds" as "warehouses" and "compounds" for every conceivable type of social misfit and academically incompetent youth. They are widely viewed as the type of school where nice people and bright students don't go. This labeling and stigmatizing of alternative school students may have a very negative impact on the students enrolled in them.[96]

Ahlstrom and Havighurst report that in one of the schools participating in the work-study experiment for delinquents, "the boys expressed ambivalence about their membership in the experimental group. . . . Observations of these boys indicated that many of them felt their status threatened by being in the program. In some situations they expressed rather directly their fear of being held up to ridicule or singled out as inferior. For some of them, loss of face was to be avoided at all costs."[97]

Members of the Michigan Educational Considerations Task Force have expressed concern about federal categorical aid for disruptive youth:

> Labeling youth "delinquent, neglected, abused, incorrigible, etc." reinforces the development and maintenance of lower self-concepts and is an inadequate basis for funding programs.[98]

They recommend that school systems develop a classification system of educational programs according to learning models—such as "school without walls," "Family Life Education Center"—rather than emphasizing the categorization and labeling of youth.[99]

Racial Isolation

In many school districts across the country, alternatives are now equated with alternatives to school suspension. As a higher percentage of minority students are suspended or excluded from schools, these alternatives, in effect, may become enclaves for black, latino, Native American, and poor white students. According to Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, black children are particularly discriminated against:

> Data from the Office for Civil Rights show that although blacks are 27 percent of the total school enrollment, they account for 42 percent of all suspensions. One out of every eight black secondary student was suspended during the 1972-73 school year compared to one out of every sixteen white secondary student. . . . Many of these suspensions were not for acts of violence, but offenses like truancy, tardiness, insubordination, smoking, and failing to have a gym suit.[100]

Our own observations of alternatives to suspension in twelve urban areas of the country—and secondary data we have gathered—tend to substantiate this dangerous trend toward isolation of minority students and especially blacks. To cite examples from cities with well-developed systems of alternatives: In Grand Rapids data for the period from 9/1975 to 2/1976 indicate that over two-thirds of the students who were suspended on a long-term basis were black or latino minorities which represent less than 20% of the school population in the city. Minority enrollment at the two alternative education programs for disruptive or disaffected students (Walbridge Academy and Street Academy) is disproportionately high. Walbridge is over 55% black, Native American, and latino, and the Street Academy is over 80% minority. When three white students from a high school located in a middle-class neighborhood in Grand Rapids were apprehended destroying science laboratory equipment, they were transferred to another high school, rather than one of the academies, because it was reasoned that they were well-prepared academically and would suffer by being sent to one of the alternatives for hard-core offenders where academic standards were not so high. In contrast, virtually all of the students in an elementary program (grades 3-6), for approximately 50 children considered difficult to teach, were black. Many of them were referred from white schools to which they had been bused. In 1975 and 1976, not a single white child had been referred to the program. The institutional racism, very subtle indeed,

was that teachers would attempt to work with white children but not blacks. Grand Rapids has been mentioned in some detail because it is a progressive school district, led by a liberal school administration concerned with equality of educational opportunity. If alternatives are being misused in a city like Grand Rapids, the picture may not be very encouraging for other urban areas of the country.

In Los Angeles, "alternatives" are heavily weighted toward students from middle-class professional backgrounds. And the white representation in them is significantly higher than in the district overall. "Options" serve the less well off and minority students. Continuation Schools, Opportunity Schools, and Tri-C programs fall under this category. All three are special environments for troubled, suspended, or expelled students. Tri-C or the Community Centered Classrooms program, is "the newest alternative to serve expelled kids." The population is mostly black and latino although the program, according to one of its coordinators, started in response to trouble in the Valley involving white students who had been arrested on drug charges. Those white students are back in regular classrooms in their original schools.

In Louisville, Kentucky, the Longfellow School, in 1976, served as an alternative for the most troublesome youth in the Jefferson County School District. The district has approximately 20% black student enrollment, but over 85% of the students in Longfellow were black. Blacks also represent about one-third of the students in the district's in-school program for difficult but manageable youth.

In St. Paul, the two Career Study Centers serve as schools of last resort for difficult, if not delinquent, youth. Each high school in the city has been assigned five "slots." When high schools were racially imbalanced, the white-black ratio in the centers was more representative of the city's population. Once the high schools were racially integrated, however, a disproportionate number of blacks were referred to the centers and they now represent approximately 40% of the students in the program—in a city with less than 15% blacks.

In Chicago, there are four Discipline Schools for disruptive students. Although blacks comprise a majority (59%) of the school population, they are still disproportionately over represented in these alternatives. The percentage of blacks in the two Discipline Schools for boys ranges from a low of 72% to a high of 99%, and blacks represent 83% and 89% of the population in the two schools for girls.

In Dade County, Florida, black students (29% of the population) comprise 72% of the students in alternative schools for disruptive youth. In 1976, the Planning and Evaluation Department of the Dade County Public Schools, with the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity, designed forms and procedures to collect data descriptive of the disruptive history of the district's 1,240 "worst" students—76% of these students were black.[101] In the School Centers for Special Instruction (SCSI), which work with the more tractable discipline cases for a period

of several days, the median number of students served per day in 1976 were the following: 2 white, 3 black, 1 spanish.[102]

Isolation further occurs when certain alternative programs are considered to be for members of a particular racial-ethnic group. In Seattle, for example, there are alternative programs for disruptive blacks and programs for disruptive white students. Over half of the dropout programs in the city are either predominantly white or predominantly black.

Tracking and Channeling

In the cities we have examined in some depth—Louisville, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Los Angeles, Houston, Berkeley, Seattle, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati—there are strong indications that the twin phenomena of "dumping" and "creaming" are occurring through the uses of alternative schools. The "dumping" phenomenon—which appears to be almost universal—is the process by which teachers, administrators, and counselors get rid of the troublemakers by "referring" them to alternative programs. The "creaming" phenomenon refers to the process of establishing special programs for gifted or talented youth.[103] Often children can progress in these select alternatives from primary education through high school and on to prestigious colleges. These programs tend to have a disproportionately low representation of minorities (other than Asians) and working class students.[104] What alternatives constitute, in effect, are a new form of tracking.

The track or type of academic program a student attends in high school is an important determinant of what opportunities are available to the individual not only for further study but for attaining gainful, satisfying employment.[105] While many of the alternative programs for unsuccessful students concentrate on basic academic skills and pre-job socialization, it is also the case that these programs offer a diluted academic preparation. For example, less than half the students enrolled in the Dade County alternative schools indicated that they are taking a science course, and only 53% are in a social studies course.[106] In the Youth Development Program in Jefferson County, Kentucky students are not permitted to enroll in laboratory courses.[107] The programmed, "individualized" approach frequently used to assist students in alternatives may consist of cutting up a text into small units and asking for mindless, rote answers without challenging any higher-order cognitive processes. Pity for, sometimes fear of, the students often may lead teachers to hold very low expectations for their academic progress. In effect, alternative schools may become compounds for keeping students off the streets and out of trouble. Improved attendance and minimal progress toward a 6th to 8th grade level of reading and computation become primary goals of these programs.

Pre-job socialization involves, in many cases, teaching students to obey authority, to refrain from arguing with or challenging existing systems,

to be punctual, cheerful, and well groomed.[108] Students are often prepared for menial, dead-end jobs: Preparation for health professions, for example, means training to become orderlies or nurses aids. Staff viewed the vocational program at the Woodward Day School "inadequate for student needs because it trained students for low-level jobs that would be among the first to disappear in a tight labor market."[109] In the Kansas City experimental work-study program, Ahlstrom and Havighurst observed that even the more successful students were unlikely to look forward to careers "marked by economic success."[110] Thus, alternative programs may be preparing students—largely from minority and low income backgrounds—for the lower rungs of the social and economic hierarchies of American society.

Social Control

In addition to tracking and isolation of minority and dissident students, social control is further manifested in the pedagogies employed in alternative programs. To control students, variations of Skinnerian operant conditioning are used.[111] Token economies are established where students accumulate points for walking into a classroom, sitting down, completing their tasks, and not disturbing others. One teacher in such a program in Grand Rapids queried how individuals could survive in such an atmosphere that stifled creativity: "Time spent daydreaming, getting folders, pencils, papers, drawing pictures, reading books other than those assigned does not constitute a productive activity and will not be rewarded with time (points)." Another teacher intern described a similar alternative program in the same city as a "cleverly disguised concentration camp."

Tokens accumulated are usually cashed in for time-out in a recreation room in the school; for weekend excursions with the faculty to a movie, bowling alley, swimming pool, etc.; or for wilderness activities. In the hands of understanding, caring teachers, this system conceivably might help individuals not reached by other methods. Too often, operant conditioning is neither adequately understood nor ethically utilized. Students themselves manipulate the token-economy system to their advantage to avoid academic work—often to escape boring classrooms—and to strike back at the controllers.

Another method used to control deviant behavior is peer group pressure. The peer group is used to both reward and punish behavior.[112] Students who are "acting-out" are confronted by their peers who may attempt to probe the reason for the disruptive behavior, provide group support for the individual and encouragement for positive behaviors—or withdraw support as a form of punishment.

Programs which rely heavily on peer group pressure are vulnerable to several problems. Like behavioral contracts and other techniques of behavior modification, there is no guarantee that the peer programs will result in the internalization of a set of moral or ethical principles

to guide future actions. Nor is it clear that clients of such programs will act in a socially responsible way in the absence of group pressure.* There remains the danger of the tyranny of the group. In the group process, all aspects of the students' sentiments, emotions, personal life may be exposed to public scrutiny, if not criticism. Without careful supervision, this process can become hostile and destructive, rather than conducive to insight and contructive outcomes.

Often there is little or no choice involved for substantial numbers of students in programs serving as alternatives to suspension or exclusion. The alternative in many cases is institutionalization in a state "reformatory" or "training school." Many students are assigned to these programs by juvenile courts and probation officers, or they are referred by counselors. In cases of referral, students are often not acquainted with the range of options open to them or what their rights are.[113] They either go to the alternative school or they are excluded from schooling. It is lamentable that these alternatives frequently tend to be very much like the controlled, directive classrooms from which the students have been referred—perhaps, more controlled as they are smaller and thus more manageable. They represent, in many cases, another place to confine students rather than an opportunity to interact with them in other ways—especially where low-income, non-white students are involved. Furthermore, many of these are not new alternatives, but relabelled programs, with traditional procedures for dealing with difficult youth.[114]

Too Little, Too Late

The final commentary on the limitations of these programs is that too often, too little is done too late.[115] For example: in the Quincy Experiment, the researchers concluded that while the alternative program had favorably influenced junior high students with regard to interests, attitudes, and aggressive behavior, it had been less successful in the areas of academic achievement and "personality patterns." To effect change in these areas, the researchers suggested that intervention programs might have to occur as early as the first three grades of elementary school.[116] The results from the Kansas City work-study experiment with "predelinquent" thirteen and fourteen year olds are even less sanguine. The study, according to Ahlstrom and Havighurst, "failed to demonstrate that supervised work experience, even under relatively

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*Differences between token economies (or other operant conditioning schemes) and peer group influence processes should be noted. Operant schemes tend to be successful in modifying behavior within a structured, controlled setting. The successful modification may fade quickly once the individual is in the larger social environment where no tokens are dispensed and rules and situations are ambiguous. Because peer influence in the school is more akin to interactions in society, it may tend to produce changes which are more durable.

controlled conditions, could be useful in materially reducing delinquency among youth so disposed."[117] Six years after the commencement of the program, 10 of the 400 students were dead by violence, 30 others had been knifed or shot, 64 were in prison, and 238 had felony arrest records.[118] With regard to academic achievement, the results from the project were the following:

> About one-fourth of the total group of 422 continued some association with high school five years after being identified as school misfits in the seventh grade. About one in six of the total group graduated or received a high school certificate by the end of the sixth year. It should be noted, however, that almost all (93 percent) of the boys who did finish high school were in the bottom half of their class in school marks. Fifty-six percent were in the bottom one-fourth . . . Many of these boys received a certificate instead of a diploma, the certificate being awarded to students who took the required number of courses but did not make grades high enough to qualify for the diploma.[119]

The Grand Rapids Street Academy (which serves disruptive and court-referred youths) initially classified students into four groups according to amount of contact with the law. For each subgroup, the Street Academy defined specific outcomes. The goal for students identified as least disruptive was that they return to the regular school setting. Of the 19 students in this group, 11 were dropped for chronic truancy for no show reasons, one was expelled for behavior problems, and only four were transferred to a regular school.[120] For the most disruptive group of six students, the goal was to minimize contact with the law and institutionalization. The results for this group were these: one was in the State penitentiary, two were in detention, one joined the army, and two continued in the Academy.[121] The outcomes for the other groups, although mixed, were not very positive.

In many cases, individuals have fallen into deviant, if not destructive, patterns that are difficult to change; deficiencies in skills are so advanced that massive amounts of systematic and intensive remediation are required. But, resources and efforts are usually scant in relation to the magnitude of the problems. In programs that are designed to accommodate 200 students, as many as 400 students may pass through in a single year, with the program able to reach with any impact perhaps only one-third. Generally, local school districts are unwilling to provide needed additional resources—even though institutionalization of these youths in a state reformatory may cost up to $10,000 "per slot."[122] Such programs as the Career Study Centers in St. Paul and the Providence Educational Center of St. Louis, which do have a record of achievement with troublesome youth, have faced severe financial difficulties and a continuous struggle for survival.[123]

School districts, furthermore, are often unwilling to provide the time and latitude necessary to assist students who have been badly scarred by school and society. Instead, dramatic improvements are demanded immediately to justify funding. And, without federal, foundation, and state funding many of these programs would fold for lack of local support.

Research Strategies

In the previous sections, we referred to findings from major studies on alternative programs for disruptive youth. In this section, we point out some of the limitations of field research on alternatives; and we indicate some promising areas for future study.

Generally, research on alternative schools represents all the difficulties inherent in field and survey research methods, as compared with tightly-controlled experimental research conducted under laboratory conditions.[124] Research on alternative schools occurs in natural settings. It is difficult, and often impossible to isolate and introduce treatment variables one at a time to determine the impact of each, and in combination, on some designated outcomes. It is difficult to find comparable control groups and to randomly assign students to a control or experimental treatment.* Most studies are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal.*

We do believe, however, that research has progressed to the point where a series of related and cumulative studies will yield generalizable propositions on the effectiveness of alternative programs for disruptive youth. In our judgment, the most promising line of research is in the area of "person-environment fit."[125] These studies would identify what types of alternative educational settings have a beneficial influence on what types of disruptive students.

Identifying Learning Environment

Alternative schools for disruptive youth differ greatly in educational philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, and organizational characteristics. To date most of the research on alternative learning environments has concentrated on differences between conventional schools and alternatives of the "free school" and "counterculture" variety: see, for example, studies by Deal,[126] McPartland, Epstein, and McDill,[127] Duke and Perry,[128] Reisler and Friedman,[129] and Swidler.[130] Research is only

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*Exceptions to these limitations include the previously discussed studies by Ahlstrom and Havighurst, Bowman, Massimo and Shore, Cohen and Filipczak.

now beginning to be conducted on differences between characteristics of conventional programs and programs for disruptive youth.

Gold and Mann are presently in the first phase of a long-term study of the differences between learning environments of conventional and alternative school programs.[31] A distinguishing feature of the study is that it follows the canons of rigorous experimental design. In four towns in Michigan and Ohio, students who apply or are referred to the existing alternative program will be tested before and after entry into it. The candidates for the alternative program will be randomly assigned to attend either the alternative or continue in the conventional school. These students, plus a sample of non-candidates, will be asked to assess their learning environments, particularly with regard to the variables of teacher-student interaction and opportunities to succeed in school.* The researchers hypothesize that the alternatives, in comparison with the conventional programs, will be characterized by warm interpersonal relations and a high success-to-failure ratio. Once it is established that there are differences in school climates, the researchers will analyze the relationship between the dimensions of school climate, student self-esteem, and disruptive behavior.

We propose a follow-up study which would involve a purposive sample of alternative programs corresponding to each of the four cells in the following table:

		Interpersonal Relations	
		LOW	HIGH
Success-to-failure ratio	LOW	Type 1 (holding operations)	Type 2 (interpersonal relations schools)
	HIGH	Type 3 (skills schools)	Type 4 (integrating schools)

*The instruments used to measure differences in classroom environments include Flander's Interaction Analysis, the Moos and Trickett (1974) Classroom Environment Scale, and the Epstein and McPartland (1976) Quality of Life Scale.

For example, Type 2 schools consist of one or more alternative programs characterized by warm interpersonal relations but a low emphasis on academic skills and scholastic experiences. Type 3 schools emphasize skills attainment but downplay interpersonal relations: such schools may use programmed materials and a token economy with individuals working by themselves or may resemble traditional vocational-technical schools. Type 1 schools would simply be holding operations, keeping disruptive students out of the conventional schools; while type 4 schools would be characterized by a well-balanced program emphasizing both cognitive and affective development—and with the potential to integrate students into esteemed social statuses.

A variant of the above study would be to select a larger sample of schools so as to include programs that also vary on the dimensions of student choice and the general social definition of the program. Choice, as we discussed earlier, is an important attribute of alternatives, related to feelings of control over one's environment, and to a general satisfaction with the opportunity to select a compatible learning environment. Schools could be classified as to the percentage of students referred to the alternative by the juvenile justice system (where the only other option is institutionalization), or by school administrators and counselors (where the only other option is exclusion). Through self-report instruments, students also could indicate the amount of choice or compulsion involved in their attendance at the alternative. Alternatives, furthermore, could be classified according to the general perception held by referring schools (administrators, counselors, teachers, and students) as to what types of students attend the alternative and as to what such students can expect out of life. As we noted in the section on tracking and labeling, the way schools are perceived and defined may affect not only the students' self-perceptions but their views of the future. Alternatives could be ranked as receiving generally favorable or unfavorable ratings, as being high or low on prestige.

In order to conduct a study which examines all of these variables, a large sample of schools would have to be identified. The schools, then, would be purposively selected to represent variations on the independent variables of interpersonal relations, success-failure ratios, choice, societal definitions, and other critical dimensions, such as school size and student participation in decision-making. The difficulty of undertaking such an enterprise is that it would be both costly and require the cooperation of a number of schools, alternative and conventional; for we assume that the study will be established along the lines of a field experiment with a control consisting of those students who continue in the conventional schools. The advantage of the study would be that researchers and policy makers would have greater insight into the impact of specific types of learning environments on disruptive youth. As of now, only very rough comparisons can be made between alternative and conventional programs. We still do not know what particular attributes of alternatives have a beneficial influence on their clients.

Identifying Student Populations

The rubric of alternative for difficult or disruptive students contains a variety of individuals who differ markedly in the problems they have: lack of basic academic skills; low self-esteem; dysfunctional, aggressive, or withdrawn behavior; learning disabilities; unconventional, perhaps radically different, beliefs; inability to function within a conventional school setting. A staff member of the Chicago Public Education Project notes that

> Children get placed in the discipline schools when they have a repeated problem in the school and the school feels that no other alternative will serve them. I have seen one high school recommend Montefiore, a discipline school, for example to a freshman with above average intelligence whose most serious "crime" was burping loudly in the classroom. In another school a boy was only recommended after repeated suspensions, truancies and a psychiatric study. Part of the problem with these schools is that very diversity of student body—some of the students are seriously troubled, and others are just troublesome.[132]

Similarly, the study Four Hundred Losers is illustrative of the need for more sophisticated attempts at identifying student populations. In the course of their research, Ahlstrom and Havighurst realized the following:

> Youths who were carefully identified in the seventh grade as similar in mental development and social and educational maladjustment in fact showed differences in their adolescent patterns of response to school and to the work-study experiment.[133]

Researchers have indicated that a sizeable minority of individuals are unlikely to adjust very successfully to the competitive environment of conventional schools.[134] Their response to school failure and humiliation may take the form of disruption and deviance. Usually, these students are characterized as having both a high potential for anxiety (Silberberg and Silberberg,[135] and Cowan et al.), [136] and a low tolerance for frustration (Rhodes and Reiss).[137] While these traits correspond with acting-out and aggression, many students also may respond to stressful and unsuccessful situations by withdrawal and apathy. These students also are not being served by school—and they are likely to be ignored.

In the Worchester Day Therapy Center, staff discovered that instruction based on a token economy worked well with students categorized as "disruptive" or "acting-out" but did not seem to be particularly effective with students diagnosed as "more quiet" and having "withdrawal symptoms and school phobia."[138] An intriguing question concerns what type of

educational intervention might have worked with the withdrawn students?

More generally, can school systems devise a range of learning environments which would meet the needs of individuals who differ markedly in behavioral styles (e.g., control of aggression) as well as learning styles? The literature on alternatives suggests that a system of options ideally would encourage students to enroll in schools where the learning environment matched their learning styles and preferences.[139]

Researchers who have constructed typologies of learning styles, as well as levels, include Hunt, Fizzell, and Briggs Myers. Hunt, for example, has developed a model for matching the conceptual levels of students with varying environmental structures. Based on the work of Piaget, conceptual level refers to where an individual may be in a succession of stages of cognitive development, and also the "accessibility" of an individual to an instructional intervention. According to Hunt, the conceptual (CL) dimension "ranges from a very concrete level at which the person is unsocialized and capable of only very simple information processing to a complex stage where the person is self-responsible and capable of processing and organizing information in a complex way."[140] Low CL learners are characterized as being categorical, dependent on external standards to a high degree, and incapable of generating their own concepts; and high CL learners, as holding different views, having internal standards to a high degree, and capable of generating new concepts.[141] Learning environments are classified by the degree of structure exemplified by educational practices: low structure, student-centered environments make use of discovery learning; while high structure, teacher-centered environments tend more toward the lecture approach.[142] On the basis of evidence from several experimental studies, Hunt has formulated this general principle: "low CL learners profit more from high structure and high CL learners profit more from low structure or, in some cases, are less affected than low CL learners by variations in structure."[143]

Fizzell has studied the match between learning style preferences and student success in different learning environments.[144] Key factors in determining learning styles are whether students prefer to work alone or in a group; in competitive or noncompetitive situations; with peers or adults; in a school or non-school setting; with abstract or concrete, practical assignments. Fizzell also examines sources of student motivation—internal or external—and willingness to accept responsibility, to be self-disciplined, and to confront academic weaknesses realistically. According to Fizzell's doctoral research, a student may succeed in one school setting and fail in another—depending on the congruence between learner and environment.

According to Briggs Myers, the differences between children are not "quantitative differences that can be expressed simply as a high or lower degree of mental ability. They are qualitative differences in the kind of perception and the kind of judgment that the child prefers to use."[145] Students, for example, can be classified as "sensing" types

(individuals who prefer immediate, solid facts of experience), and "intuitive" types (who prefer to perceive the possibilities, meanings, and relationships of experience). Another dimension used to differentiate learning type is how students prefer to make judgments: "thinking" types, according to the model, objectively and impersonally analyze facts and order them in terms of cause and effect; "feeling" types subjectively and personally weigh values and the importance of choices for oneself and other people.[146]

McCaulley and Natter employed this typology in a study of 521 students in the seventh through tenth grades, at the Developmental Research School of Florida State University. They found that different types of students,* perform better on different types of aptitude tests. To illustrate this point, "intuitive" types tend to perform better on tests of words and symbols; whereas "sensing" types perform better on tests of practical application (such as the electronics, general mechanics, and motor mechanics sections of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery).[147]

Briggs Myers believes that "as schools improve their capacity to help each type develop in its best way, we shall find less visible disruption, and less underachievement."[148] Research along these lines with disruptive youth remains to be conducted.

As Hunt[149] and Glaser[150] have noted, such research raises a number of issues: Are student learning styles the same in all subjects? What is the relation between learning style and ability? Will these new systems of classification become another device for tracking students?

According to Hunt, a principal source of resistance to models of person-environment fit is the "fear that any differentiation of students that requires labeling (whether types, stages, or whatever) is likely to be translated into value dimensions in which some types are 'good' and therefore will receive 'more' or 'better' treatment whereas others will be in the opposite position."[151] We similarly fear that labels of student learning style or conceptual level may be translated into ironclad categories and that students, so classified, will receive instruction geared primarily to a preconceived notion of capability or preference. These concerns are particularly relevant to alternatives for disruptive youth. Evidence from attempts to pinpoint the predictors of school delinquency and to devise less abstract, more concrete and vocationally-oriented programs for unsuccessful students—the usual recommendations flowing from such studies[152]—is that these individuals are disproportionately from minority and low income backgrounds.[153] Implementation of policies aimed at early identification, separation, and homogeneous grouping of students for special treatment conceivably may operate to the detriment of individuals—whose total range of capabilities and talents are not challenged—and to the detriment of racial minorities and low income groups. These questions should be examined by macro-research on the institutional and societal implications of alternative schools.

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*Students were differentiated on the basis of their responses to a 166 item forced-choice questionnaire.

Macro-Studies

This is perhaps the most important but neglected area of research on alternatives. What impact do alternatives have on changing school systems? A central question is to what extent do alternative programs for disruptive youth diminish the level of violence and vandalism in the sending schools, as well as lower dropout, suspension, and expulsion rates. Conceivably, there may be a discrepancy between individual and collective rates of improvement. While individual students may be helped by alternatives to experience success in both school and in adult life, the overall institutional rates of school failure and disruption may continue unchanged.

These divergent findings would occur because large, bureaucratic schools —in the ways they are organized and the ways they function—tend to alienate a large number of students. Schools sort out and classify students, allocating them to future societal roles on the basis of cognitive achievement as well as personality attributes and social skills. It therefore is assumed that the competitive, bureaucratic atmosphere of conventional schools will continue to create a group of losers who will occupy the lower rungs of the occupational, political, and social hierarchies in our society. As soon as one group of dissident and disruptive students are channeled to alternatives, other students are likely to replace them within the conventional school system. These assumptions merit analysis.

A related set of questions involves how different social, racial, and ethnic groups are affected by alternatives. Have alternatives substantially helped the most neglected and victimized groups in American society? We have suggested some of the ways alternatives are helping students from different social groups; but we also have indicated that they may contribute to the perpetuation of an unsatisfactory status quo by tracking, labeling, and allocating students from different socioeconomic backgrounds to different futures.

Other areas which require further probing are these:

- the conflicting expectations held by different educational decision makers and clients concerning the purposes and functioning of alternatives—these expectations, for example, include those for structural change of education systems as well as palliative measures to cope with difficult or dissident elements within conventional schools, expectations that these programs are for talented students and expectations that they are for the incompetent and disabled;

- the referral processes by which students get sent to alternatives or are counseled out of selecting alternatives—how school personnel differentially interact with and advise students according to socioeconomic background and academic status.

- the financing of alternatives—what types of alternatives are cost-effective and why; and what are the social and political costs (e.g., vandalism, delinquency, crime) of not allocating more substantial amounts of money to those students who are most disadvantaged or victimized;[154]

- the extent to which innovative features of alternatives—changes in learning environments, in the organization and modalities of instruction, in the ways students are treated —affect policies and practices in conventional schools.

These large macro-studies, however, should be complemented by micro-studies. Ideally, anthropological or micro-ethnographic studies (for example, Henry,[155] Rist,[156] and Ogbu[157]) would enable researchers to examine in-depth those aspects of alternative programs which seem to be successful with disruptive students. Such studies might illuminate why alternatives may succeed in one area but not another: why, for example, attitudes toward school may improve, but not school attendance; why students improve in their school work, but still have problems with the law; why seemingly the same type of alternative program succeeds in one site but not another.[158] These studies of the lives of specific schools and how they affect individual students would accompany examinations of how institutional policies and practices affect the fate of many. The observations and insights from these micro-studies should be used to enrich and inform the more systematic large-scale studies that provide general, across-schools findings.

Reflections

This section contains our reflections about why some alternative programs work and others do not. Previously, we listed those aspects of alternative schools which contribute to student academic achievement, enhancement of self-concept, and a diminution in aggressive behavior. These include a warm, supportive learning environment, with a low student-adult ratio, competent and caring teachers, individualized instruction, extensive counseling and support services, student participation in decision-making, and discernible connections between the program and opportunities for advanced education or integration into the work force. These elements, in turn, are conditioned by a set of variables—some contextual and others internal—which is critical to the ultimate success or failure of the alternative program. The factors are the following: the commitment of the district's administration to the concept of a comprehensive system of public school options; adequate financing out of local funds; sufficient autonomy for the alternative to experiment and diverge from standard operating procedures; consistent and continuous leadership by the director of the alternative program; and a constituency willing to fight for the survival and integrity of the program.

Our survey indicates that a critical determinant of the viability and success of a program is the commitment of a school district's administration to the concept of a system of options available to all students. The notion is that of providing an array of distinctive learning environments from which students may chose—from the first year of primary school through completion of secondary school. It means that the district does not establish one "alternative" to serve as the dumping ground for those who do not fit into the "regular" system. An important corollary of this notion is that when students do not learn, when they withdraw from or rebel against school, it is because the education system is failing the student. The responsibility resides with the school system to find educational treatments which will meet the needs of diverse populations.

This commitment is manifest in the provision of adequate resources to support a system of alternatives. A district should create positions related to the direction, supervision, material support, and evaluation of alternatives. The provision of adequate funds out of the district's operating budget is very important. Too often distirct's depend too heavily on federal and state funding as the mainstay of alternative programs. In cases where a school district uses external funds in lieu of its own appropriations to finance alternatives, a situation of uncertainty concerning the continued existence of the experimental schools prevails and tends to undermine the efforts of the alternative education personnel. Outside funds are more reasonably seen as extra monies to be used at the discretion of the staff of alternative programs, for frequently additional funds are necessary to operate programs for students who have been neglected in the past. Extra funds may be necessary for massive remediation, for technical-vocational training on expensive equipment, for paid work experiences, for extensive counseling, for keeping schools open on an extended basis so that individuals can seek help after normal class hours, for summer tutorial programs, for excursions to different cultural and environmental settings.

Another manifestation of a district's commitment to its options is its willingness to provide alternative programs with sufficient autonomy to develop a curriculum and employ a staff who can effectively assist students with a history of failure. The latitude required by such programs may range from a flexible class schedule and school day (e.g., a shortened day) to opportunities to hold classes out of the school or take students on extended field trips, to hiring school staff, including administrative directors, who do not have standard certification. Frequently, certification requirements exclude the hiring of individuals (particularly women and minority members) who are extremely qualified by experience (e.g., street workers) to counsel and teach disruptive youths. Latitude also must be provided in the area of evaluation, promotion, and graduation of students. Programs of individualized, nongraded, continuous progress instruction exist, as do competency-based examinations, whereby a student can satisfy academic requirements in an abbreviated period without waiving state standards. A commitment to autonomy especially means that the school district—as well as an external funding agency—is willing

to wait for long-term outcomes of alternative education treatments, rather than demanding—as is often the case—immediate results for monies allocated.

At the level of individual schools, leadership is a critical variable. Without exception, successful alternative programs were headed by a single individual who had a vision of what a more humane and effective school could be, and who provided the philosophical underpinnings, recruited the appropriate staff, structured a consistent learning environment, and communicated the school's mission to different constituencies. An important aspect of leadership was a flexibility to change over time, and to delegate responsibility to other staff so that they would be prepared for future leadership roles. The enduring alternative programs have an individual director who stayed with the program not only through the initial heroic founding struggles, but during the implementation stage when more routine problems tended to erode the distinctiveness of a program.

Finally, successful alternative programs engender commitment on the part of students, parents, staff, and the community at large. The survival and continued well being of an alternative program depends on a constituency of people who will do battle to maintain its mission and its integrity. A sense of community must be forged whereby the students as a collectivity work to prevent troublesome individuals from disrupting the learning environment. Similarly, there are occasions when parents must be willing to come to the assistance of the school—either in terms of helping enrich instructional programs or in taking a stand before the district leadership when the school is threatened with termination or substantial modification. And the staff's commitment must be to the notion of continual self- and programmatic-improvement to serve their clients.

What we have argued for represents an ideal set of conditions. These ideals, however, derive from the policies and practices of the more successful school systems and alternative education programs we visited.

Appendix A

Types of Alternative Schools

All kinds of schools exist under the label "alternative." There are very small schools with scant resources and large schools or complexes that cost a great deal of money to set up and maintain. The following descriptions of common types of alternative schools are taken largely from two publications by Vernon Smith, Robert Barr, and Daniel Burke—Optional Alternative Public Schools (Phi Delta Kappa, Fastback 42, Bloomington, 1974), and Alternatives in Education (Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, 1976).

MAGNET SCHOOLS attract students interested in a specialized curriculum, such as science or the performing arts.

OPTIONAL SCHOOLS allow parents and students to choose a learning style. Frequently, they can choose an "open" school, a "continuous progress" school, a "free" school, or a traditional school.

OPEN SCHOOLS provide individualized instruction or small group learning activities organized around resource centers within the classroom or building. Learning is individualized and noncompetitive. Students progress at different rates. Open education frequently has interage grouping—several grades working together on the same learning activities. Frequently, students are actively involved in determining what they will learn and how they will learn it.

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS SCHOOLS, as in open schools, is a system in which pupils move at their own pace with individualized instruction and individualized help from the staff. They differ from open schools in the amount of time a student is allowed to spend on tasks purely of his or her own choosing..

FREE SCHOOLS emphasize freedom for students and teachers to plan and implement their own learning experiences without conventional constraints.

SCHOOLS-WITHOUT-WALLS provide learning experiences throughout the community and offer increased interaction between school and community.

MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS emphasize cultural pluralism and ethnic and racial awareness; they usually serve a multicultural student body. Bilingual schools with optional enrollment are included in this category.

CONTINUATION SCHOOLS make provision for students whose education has been (or might be) interrupted—dropout centers, re-entry programs, pregnancy-maternity centers, evening and adult high schools, and street academies.

STORE-FRONT SCHOOLS AND STREET ACADEMIES are located where they are readily accessible to the dropout and limited in size so that they will not appear similar to the large comprehensive high school.

SCHOOLS-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL operate when a small number of students and teachers are involved by choice in a different learning program. This category includes both the minischool within the building and the satellite school on another location but with administrative ties to the conventional school. Schools-within-schools usually belong to one of the types above.

The COMPLEX OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS has several optional alternative schools housed together in one building and usually under one administration.

APPENDIX B

Research Methodology

Observations in this paper are based on a review of the literature and field visits, in the Spring and Fall of 1976, to what we considered to be the leading school districts in the country experimenting with alternative education: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Grand Rapids, Louisville, Chicago, Boston-Cambridge, Philadelphia, Houston, Los Angeles, Alum Rock, Berkeley, and Seattle. Approximately three to five days were spent in each site analyzing the range of extant alternatives. We did not set out to study specifically alternatives for disruptive students. Rather, we were interested in the metamorphosis the alternative schools movement of the late sixties and early seventies had undergone: from alternatives to public schooling, the movement has been transformed into alternatives within public education. We wanted to discern how alternatives were defined by teachers, administrators, students, and parents; what types of alternatives existed in the cities we visited; what types of students (by race, social class, sex) attended what types of alternatives; what conflicting expectations surrounded alternatives —for example, whether they were schools designed to "free" children or control troublemakers; and what were the outcomes and implications of these schools.

In each site, we visited what we considered to be a representative sample of alternative programs. We visited primary and secondary schools, schools with open and selective admissions policies, programs for the academically successful and those for the unsuccessful. The specific alternative programs for disruptive youth which we visited included the following: in St. Paul, The Street Academy and the Career Study Centers; in Berkeley, East Campus; in Boston, Boston High School; in Louisville, the Longfellow School, Project Way Out, and the administrative offices for the Jefferson County Youth Development Program; in Grand Rapids, the Street Academy, Walbridge Academy, Sweet Street Academy, and the Neighborhood Education Center; in Seattle, Project Interchange Junior and Senior High Schools; and in Los Angeles, the Amelia Earhart Continuation School. In Seattle we also had conversations with the founder of PS #1; in Chicago, we spoke with the directors of the Alternative Schools Network; and in Philadelphia, we met with staff from the Edison Project.

We visited the above schools because they were typical of alternative schools for disruptive youths in these cities and, in some cases, they were the only such available alternatives. Our visits were limited to one or two hours in each site—and principally involved interviews with the alternative program director, several staff members, and students who were willing to discuss the school. Insights and impressions from visits to these schools have been incorporated into the text as well as into case studies of four alternative programs in Appendix C.

Prior to our visits, we read extant studies and reports on alternative schools in these cities. Indiana University/Bloomington is the site of

ICOPE, the International Consortium for Options in Public Education. Since its inception in 1971, ICOPE has gathered an abundance and variety of evaluative studies and reports on the alternative schools movement in the United States and abroad. Moreover, the Master's Degree Program in Alternative Education at Indiana University/Bloomington places students for a year of practice teaching in alternative schools in several of the sites we visited. These graduate students keep diaries of their experiences. The diaries, placed on reserve in the School of Education Library, are an excellent source of information on the internal life of many of these schools and the challenges and frustrations starting teachers have in them.

After reviewing the literature on each site, we devised a series of questions to be asked about the origins, functioning, and outcomes of alternatives in that school district. Conversation with school personnel in each site generated further questions. We structured our interviews so that individuals could respond to conflicting points of view on the uses and misuses of alternatives. We might ask a person to respond to what people had commented about his/her position on alternatives or the nature of the program in which the person was working. In many respects, our interviewing technique was akin to investigative reporting.

APPENDIX C

CASE STUDIES

In this appendix we present detailed descriptions of four of the alternatives we visited. We selected those schools not because we endorse them as models, but because they represent a range of typical alternative schools for disruptive youth and because data exist on program outcomes. The schools represent these different educational strategies: basic skills acquisition and comprehensive counseling, behavior modification, affective development, and work-study. Again, our descriptions are based on visits of one-to-two hours duration and on extant evaluations. The case studies refer to the programs as they existed in 1976. Major modifications in the programs may have occurred since that time.

EAST CAMPUS—BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

In 1970-71 the McKinley continuation high school, founded in 1933, moved to a modern single-story building on the grounds of the Adult School complex,* located several blocks from Berkeley High School (BHS), and changed its name to East Campus. In 1967, the arrival of a dynamic principal had marked the beginning of a dramatic change from a continuation school widely regarded as a "dumping ground," occupying a decrepid building, into one of Berkeley's more exciting educational programs. In the late 1960s, the school served not only as an alternative program for the chronic failures, truants, and rejects of the city's only high school, but was an educational program that attracted large numbers of counterculture youth. Elements of the program which appealed to the youths were the shortened-day (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), smaller classes, and a close informality with the staff. Moreover, the principal—one of Berkeley's "six angry young men"—attracted teachers who had a reputation for excellence. In 1971, East Campus became a part of the NIE-funded Berkeley Experimental School Project (BESP) with the justification that it offered, according to the current principal, "something which no other program could offer—a continuation school with a half-day program focused on basic skills for survival in the world, supported by a caring and cohesive staff."[159]

The central emphasis of teaching is on academic achievement—the ability to read and write and compute accurately and adequately—and on survival skills which include social skills and self-appreciation. Forty to fifty percent of instructional time is dedicated to basic academic skills. Students attend high intensity learning laboratories in reading and mathematics. The reading laboratory uses a variety of audio-visual aids and programmed materials related to differing skills levels; the packages include pre- and post-tests, the Basic Test of Reading Skills,

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*East Campus utilizes 10 out of the 33 classrooms in the complex: 5 classrooms are in the main facility and are shared with the Adult School, 4 are in the Administration building, and 1 is in the library.

and prescriptions for academic treatment. The mathematics laboratory, which has two computer terminals into the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) central computer, uses Rasmussen Individualized Math materials.

In conjunction with this individually-tailored approach to learning, East Campus has eliminated the F-grade, and emphasizes credits earned rather than grades. Under this plan, students who have accumulated the necessary credits can graduate any time during the academic year. The staff, however, requires graduating students to perform at an absolute level defined and measured by them—or at about a 10th grade level of proficiency in basic academic skills.

The academic program further offers a business laboratory and a number of electives. The business laboratory, equipped with a dozen IBM typewriters and modern electronic adding machines, involves training in typing, filing, and bookkeeping. The most common electives are ethnic studies, interpersonal relations, sociology of men and women, psychology, creative writing, and arts.

In the morning, students attend four one-hour class periods in English, math, history, science, arts and crafts, and business. In the afternoon, the school sponsors optional activities which include library, study-tutor service, a photo laboratory, career center, and in-school work experience for credit.

Academic, vocational, and personal counseling is a salient aspect of the East Campus program. All teachers are expected to serve as counselors and as student advocates before different city social and legal agencies. With BESP and private foundation money, East Campus was able to hire as many as 5 part-time counselors' aides, who came out of a background similar to that of the students, and a full-time job counselor. The shortened day provides time for staff meetings three times a week to discuss the progress and problems of every single student. Recognizing the importance of family life to the well being of the students, the staff at East Campus, in 1974, also initiated a family counseling program with the training assistance of the Family Therapy Institute of Marin County, California.[160]

The former director of East Campus maintained that the program did not have a new or innovative teaching methodology—"We just combine the fundamental needs of the students and our staff's desire to aid the student needs in whatever way possible."[161] Such an approach, however, diverges from conventional notions that the student is to blame. The prevalent philosophy at East Campus is that the school system has failed the student.

East Campus has attracted some remarkably talented and dedicated teachers, including a sixteen-year veteran who had been voted outstanding teacher in BHS. This teacher liked the challenge of working at East Campus. The Director of East Campus tended to hire individuals "who were strong,

mature, intelligent human beings willing to give of self and not necessarily looking for love of students."[162]

After a tumultous initial period of excessive permissiveness, with high faculty burn-out, the staff came to the conclusion that it was necessary to maintain their integrity as adults and not be bullied by students. If they were angry with students, they would show it. The staff would manifest their caring and respect for students by demanding commitment and achievement from them.

By 1974-75, the staff had stabilized at 15 full-time certificated personnel, with two or three part-time assistants. Blacks have consistently represented one-third of the faculty. Unlike many alternative school staffs for disruptive youth, where it is presumed that male teachers are needed to handle difficult students, the East Campus staff has a very high proportion of females—8 out of 17 certificated staff in 1976.

Unlike the staff, which has been characterized by relatively little turn-over, the student body represents a constant flow of individuals through the school. While the staff would like to limit the student enrollment to approximately 150, it consistently exceeded 200. In 1976, 210 student positions were budgeted for the school, but enrollments had reached 233.

About 450 students pass through the school each year. The external evaluation of the BESP reports that in the period February 26-March 23, 1974, with a population of 186, 24 students transferred in and 25 transferred out for a month's turnover rate of 12.5%.[163] The evaluators also report that in the course of the 1972-73 school year, 140 of the 172 students enrolled in the fall, withdrew from school. A small number of students graduated. The rest transferred out of the district, went back to Berkeley High School, transferred to one of the other experimental school programs, or entered a program like the Job Corps. Most of the students who left, unfortunately, did not continue their education.[164]

Despite the large number of students who do not complete their course work at East Campus, the staff believes that perhaps only 10% of the students entering the program can be written off as total failures. The remaining 90%, in their opinion, have been positively influenced in one way or another by the staff's personal concern for them.

The student body, in 1976, was 60% black, 33% white, and 7% other minority. About half the students (49%) were female. Approximately 20% of the students are self-referred (usually on the advice of friends), 30% are court assigned, and 50% are referred by counselors at BHS. Although a number of 9th grade students, who lacked sufficient academic credit to enter BHS, have been referred to the program, generally, the staff at East Campus prefers to work with high school students, grades 10-12.

East Campus is not able to enroll all those who apply. Before being admitted students are interviewed by the East Campus staff. Priority is given to those students whose records of chronic failure classify them as most in need of the program. Although a higher percentage of white students apply to the program, more blacks are admitted due to their over representation among those involuntarily assigned to the school.

Removal from the school—for chronic truancy, lack of academic commitment, or "unrelenting hostility" (especially to other students)—is not considered a disciplinary action. Suspension and expulsion are not reported on student records. Instead, students are placed on the waiting list and permitted to re-enter when they are willing to do the necessary work.

While the staff is demanding of students, the students, in turn, can call upon the staff to deliver what they promise.[165] Students are encouraged to play an active role in program development and improvement.

Our own observations, as well as those of the external evaluators, indicate that relations between staff and students are intimate and friendly. Students are willing to approach their teachers as people whom they can trust. Three-fourths of students at East Campus reported to the NIE external evaluators that they "found teachers always eager to listen to school problems or to help find solutions." About half also reported that teachers encouraged students to get together to help each other.[166]

Some of the outcomes of this intimate learning environment are that there are very low levels of violence and vandalism at the school, and virtually no racial tension. By contrast, over 90% of the East Campus students perceive more incidents of physical violence in the regular schools they attended.[167]

Limited data are available on the academic achievement of students. The 1973-74 BUSD evaluation of the Experimental Schools Project reported that 4% of the East Campus 10th graders "topped out" of the CTBS reading test; and 5% "topped out" in mathematics.[168]

The most persistent problems faced by East Campus are the rapid turnover of students and truancy. The location of East Campus, on the grounds of the Adult School with no bells and hallway monitors, has encouraged class cutting. One new approach East Campus has taken with regard to attendance is to give some recognition to students who are in class by sending rosters of the students present to the BUSD Attendance Office: normally, only those absent have their names forwarded to the office.

Several of the favorable circumstances surrounding the program have been the following: its inclusion in the BESP which helped legitimate East Campus as an innovative school—rather than a dumping ground—and brought in additional funds ($147,000 between 1971 and 1976) for materials, summer tutoring and comprehensive counseling; the fact that in addition to

its alternative school status, East Campus was still considered a continuation school on the state and district records and therefore continued to receive extra monies; the autonomy accorded the school director and staff to experiment—as East Campus was considered a safety valve to let off steam (i.e., unmanageable students); a very strong administrative leadership with a cohesive, dedicated staff. Another positive factor is the good state of relations between East Campus and the referring high school. The present principal of BHS was the former director of East Campus. When the Berkeley Experimental Schools Project was phased out in 1977, East Campus was reincorporated into the BUSD, which was not the happy fate of most of the participating alternatives.

WALBRIDGE ACADEMY—GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Since 1972, Walbridge Academy has occupied an old but spacious two-story red-brick building, formerly used as an elementary school for special education children. Prior to 1972, Walbridge had operated under a variety of names and auspices. Its origins go back to the mid-1960s, when the Grand Rapids Public School System, in conjunction with the Kent County Juvenile Court, developed a four-month program to rehabilitate students expelled from school so that they could return to the regular classroom.[169] Students and their parents then, began to push for an expanded program, which would confer an academic degree. School district officials, sympathetic to the notion of a more comprehensive approach to problems of student disaffiliation and dropout, established, in 1970, an Alternative Education Planning Committee, consisting of school personnel and representatives of the Juvenile Court and members of the community. The result was the opening, in 1971-72, of an Alternative Education Center (now Walbridge) for grades 7-12.

Pedagogical elements of the previous programs were consolidated into a highly-structured learning environment based on the principles of behavior modification. The students experience a "differential learning model in which socially desirable behaviors lead to more favorable consequences and defeating behaviors result in negative consequences."[170] Consonant with the notion of positive reinforcement is the use of performance contracts and programmed materials (Alpha Instructional Laboratory and the Educational Development Lab) within the framework of a token economy. All instruction centers on continuous progress, individualized learning packets. Students are immediately rewarded for successful completion of specific, sequential learning tasks. Failing grades have been eliminated; and a student must achieve at least a letter grade of "C" to demonstrate mastery of subject matter.

The school has designed elaborate procedures to award students points for punctuality, appropriate classroom and social behaviors, productivity (time spent working) and academic achievement (scores of 80% or above on the progress check test). Tokens earned for prosocial behavior and learning can then be "cashed in" for free time in a recreation room (up to 15 minutes during class time), which contains pool and ping-pong

tables, a jukebox, games, magazines, and snacks. Points accumulated also can be traded in for a variety of other rewards: trips to Chicago, weekend camping trips, bowling, and a week-long camping expedition on Isle Royale at the end of the year.

Negative behavior is punished by a system of "time-outs." A thirty-minute time-out involves isolation for minor and first offenses, such as, being out of class without a proper pass, not following classroom procedures, smoking where not permitted, cheating the system. Three thirty-minute time-outs during a 10 week period requires a conference with a counselor before a student is admitted back to class. A "major time-out" results in students losing all privileges and being asked to leave the school building. Offences which occasion a major time-out include the following: fighting, destroying property, physically or verbally threatening staff and students, and suspicion of having or using drugs in school. Students are admitted only after a conference is held between the school counselor, the disciplined student, and parents or guardians.

The counseling program at Walbridge Academy, similarly, operates on the principles of behavior modification. Little is offered in the way of clinical, or even vocational, counseling. According to the administrator and counseling staff: "Inferred constructs such as ego-strength, self-concept, and similar personality factors are ignored. Rather, in each approach, it is assumed that the student acts in unique ways because of his particular learning history, including the potency and consistency of social and tangible reinforcers, the potency and availability of various social models, and other concepts provided by social learning theory."[171]

Group counseling sessions are established for all incoming students. During the first two weeks, new students identify why they are attending Walbridge and What they want to get out of school; and they set the goals towards which they will work.[172]

After the initial two-week probationary period, students may elect, with the assistance of a counselor, to study as many as eight courses a day. The day is divided into nine 43-minute periods. Approximately 90 minutes daily is dedicated to individualized instruction in reading and mathematics. The curriculum revolves around mini-courses, requiring approximately 15 periods of productive work. Each mini-course is worth one credit (1/10 Carnegie Unit) toward high school graduation. Staff are encouraged to develop mini-courses which will complement the high-intensity basic skills laboratories. For the most part instruction is confined to reading, mathematics, science, history, social studies, and English.

At the time of our visit, there were 26 staff members, which included 4 university teacher-interns and 6 aides. One-third of the certificated staff was black. According to the Director, there has been relatively little turn over of staff. A 1975 external evaluation of the program

reported that staff exhibit relatively high morale and dedication to their work.[173]

The school has attempted to maintain a low student-faculty ratio with no class exceeding 15 pupils. Generally, the ratio of students to teachers is between 8 and 9 to 1.

The student body, as tends to be the case with such programs, is characterized by a high turnover. While the program has a capacity of 250 students, by March of 1976, already 400 students had passed through the school. Of the 220 students who elected to attend Walbridge in the fall, 150 remained in the spring.

The school reserves 30 "slots" for students suspended from conventional schools—many more are referred to the school as the only alternative short of expulsion or institutionalization. (About 10 to 15% of the students are on probation.) As a higher percentage of blacks are suspended in the Grand Rapids Schools System, they are disproportionately represented in the Academy. The student composition of Walbridge is 45% black, 45% white, and 10% Native American, with 3 or 4 Latinos. Females comprise one-fourth of the student body.

The Native Americans, according to the director, are all at the school voluntarily. When we discussed why they attended Walbridge, the students said the school was friendlier and that they liked working at their own pace. On the other hand, a Native American, first-day student, who arrived a few minutes late and was reprimanded by the director, said he would never return.

Relations between faculty and students cannot be described as intimate. A business-like atmosphere pervades the school. The social climate is one of tight control, where students are rewarded for behaving properly—the rules are well known—and punished swiftly but fairly for infractions.

The 1975 evaluation of Walbrdige included an assessment of student satisfaction. The study concludes that students generally feel that they have progressed in major academic areas, that they have been happier at Walbridge than at their previous schools, and that they would like the program to become a "full-fledged" school in the sense of providing a more diversified curriculum and extracurricular opportunities.[174]

The staff's program assessment, similarly, reveals the desire to expand curriculum opportunities. Other areas of concern were the "lack of staff consistency" and work being too easy and unchallenging at the upper levels.[175]

Our interviews with teachers revealed differing expectations for student achievement. A former assistant principal said that the idealism with which he had approached the program dissolved when he realized

early on that "you can't push here." Students, in his opinion, show "no sustained interest in anything over 15 minutes." Because of their low level of reading skills and lack of knowledge, he believes they prefer not to expose their weaknesses by reading aloud or engaging in classroom discussion about current events; instead, they want to be left alone with their learning packets. The school, therefore, represents an unchallenging but "safe haven" for students who have been badly neglected by conventional schools. Another staff member, teaching a course on global awareness, thought the students do manifest interest in themes and academic subjects that affect their lives.

Concerning learning outcomes, the 1975 evaluation of Walbridge showed the following results for 35 students on the Wide Range Achievement Test for Mathematics and the Nelson Reading Test:[176]

Grade Level	Average* Reading Gain	Average* Mathematics Gain
8	+2.2	+.5
9	+ .1	+.5
10	+ .9	+.2
11	+ .6	+.9
12	+ .8	0

*Reported in number of grade levels

An earlier study estimated an average grade level gain per semester in reading of .56 for the students enrolled in Walbridge, as compared with a .27 average gain when they were in regular school. The study was limited to a sample of 15 students who had completed one semester at Walbridge, who had attended at least 50% of the days enrolled, and who had completed at least twenty-four reading class periods of 43 minutes duration.[177]

Concerning antisocial behavior, Walbridge appears to be successful in structuring a learning environment where there is relatively little aggressive or "acting-out" behavior. The subjective appraisal of the staff is that such behavior has been greatly diminished.[178] Data for the Third Marking Period of 1974-75 lends some credence to these staff assessments. During that period, the average number of disciplinary time-outs per student ranged from a low of .6 for a group of 33 eleventh grade students to a high of 3 for 29 eighth grade students.[179] In the area of racial interaction, the director described the situation as one of "peaceful co-existence."

The school is less effective in curbing truancy. The 1975 evaluation noted that 40% of students who enter Walbridge improve their attendance, but 60% exhibit poorer attendance.[180] The average daily attendance is usually about 60% of the student body.

Completion rates also are low. During the period 1972-75, 50 students graduated. According to the director, only 7 of this group went to college; the rest tended to enter unskilled factory and service jobs.

Financially, Walbridge receives approximately the same per-pupil expenditures from the district as do the conventional school programs—which in 1976 was about $1,100. Funds received from Title I of ESEA, LEAA, and the State are not additional monies but substitute for local district allocations to the school. These funds are given to the district's central administration, which then decides upon the per pupil amount to be allotted to the alternative. On the other hand, the Grand Rapids Public Schools are very much committed to maintaining a system of viable options for disaffiliated secondary students who represent high social costs in terms of potential lost, vandalism, and institutionalization. In this sense, the future of the Walbridge Academy seems secure.

SWEET STREET ACADEMY—GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Sweet Street Academy is an alternative program for 30 to 40 disruptive elementary students, grades 3-7, occupying two rooms in the annex of the Sheldon elementary school. The program was started, with Title I funding in 1974, by a former elementary school principal and a teacher whose intern practicum the previous year had been with disruptive elementary students. As the decision to establish the program was made several weeks prior to the opening of the fall semester, the first year of Sweet Street was rather hectic: teachers were assigned at the last minute, and school supplies and furniture arrived after the initiation of classes. In 1974-75, the program was located in the Madison Park Elementary School; in 1975-76 it moved to the Sheldon School. Sweet Street shares the playground, gym, lunchroom, library, and art room, as well as counseling services, with the host elementary school.

As the alternative program works with so-called "unmanageable" young students, the school's primary focus is on enhancing the self-esteem of students and fostering trust in adults. According to the director, one goal of the program is "to break down any alienations that the students may have built up in their school experiences with teachers."[181] While the development of reading and mathematical skills is a central objective of the school, the staff feels that the best route to accomplish this goal is through the affective growth of the student.

The development of self-esteem and positive behavior on the part of students pivots on the teachers establishing meaningful personal relations with each child. In the words of the director, the staff strives

"to be humanistic child centered people with authority."[182] The teachers are involved to an extraordinary extent with their pupils—not only in class, but after school. The 1975 external evaluation of the program notes that teacher involvement with the students' personal lives "is typified by the fact that the staff often make calls on students' families and by the frequency which evaluators found the students and teachers together outside of the classroom setting. For example, some of the staff have had children into their homes as rewards for various behavior and as a mechanism whereby affective growth can be achieved."[183]

In accordance with a focus on affective growth, the school day begins with the Magic Circle Curriculum of the Human Development Institute of California. During a 30-minute period, students talk about their feelings in a non-threatening environment, learn to listen to others, and pool their efforts to help one another. Both communication and interpersonal skills are developed in these sessions.

The morning is dedicated to instruction in reading and mathematics, writing, science, and social studies. Students receive individualized instruction within three general ability groups. Afternoons are set aside for individualized activities and instruction. Friday afternoon activities center on the arts and crafts. There are no classes on Wednesday afternoon, when the staff meets to plan learning activities. Generally, the staff tends to be eclectic in the selection of materials and teaching strategies for the cognitive area of the curriculum. This eclecticism contrasts with the more sharply focused approach in the affective area.

The school uses a modified point system to reward desirable social behavior. During its first year of operation, the school established a "store," which was open once a week. Students could "cash in" points for candy as well as other items such as model airplanes. Films also were shown in exchange for points. In 1976, students who earned as many as 7 out of 9 points (stars) during the week (e.g., for not fighting or cussing) were taken out by the staff on the weekend to bowl, swim, ice skate. The point system provides opportunities for closer interaction between staff and students after school.

The teachers communicate close attachment to the students and a willingness to share their personal lives with the students. None of the staff was specifically trained to work with disruptive children, but they are highly committed to improving themselves as teachers and finding educational means to serve the students academic and personal needs. The staff, which initially consisted of a teacher-director and an intern, expanded by 1976 to 3 teachers, an intern, and an aide.

In 1976 there were 33 students, grades 3 to 7. Although the school was originally intended to serve only grades 3 to 6, four sixth grade students opted to continue with the program. Twenty-three students were in the fifth and sixth grades. One-fourth of the students were female.

Students, generally, are referred by screening committees from 5 feeder Title I schools. Before a student is enrolled, a visit is made by the Sweet Street director and a person from the school who knows the child's parents to explain the program, and why the child was selected for placement.[184] The parents and students, in most cases, visit the Academy prior to enrollment. In only one case, did a parent decline to place the child in the program. In the first two years, the student body was entirely black. Not one white student was referred to the program. One of the founding staff members explained to us that in some cases white teachers in outer city schools, to which black students had been bused, were referring pupils with whom they were having problems. When the Sweet Street teacher visited the referring schools, she found that there was often a communication problem between student and child, or that frequently the problem was a hearing or other perceptual disability.

Some children who had been notorious as troublemakers modified their behavior drastically once they entered the Sweet Street Academy. Good rapport with teachers and the experience of success seem to be contributory factors. The students, in the words of the 1975 evaluation, "overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with their program at Sweet Street." They stated that they were happier, had improved in reading and math, and indicated that they would like to attend the program the following year.[185] (During the first two years, 95% of the students returned to the school to continue their studies at a higher grade level.) The report further notes that parents, similarly, "see their children learning more, becoming more positive toward school, and improving their self-concepts."[186]

The teachers, in their assessment of the program, indicated that the students as a group improved in self-confidence, work habits in school, social behavior, and temperament.[187] While occasional fights between students did erupt, students generally were not "acting-out" and they were attending in a more systematic way to their studies.

Test results suggest that the program has been successful in imparting basic skills. The Grand Rapids Public Schools Objective Referenced Test Series (ORTS) showed substantial gains in reading and mathematics: reading improvements ranged from the equivalent of a 1.25 gain in grade level to .8; mathematics improvements ranged from a 1.4 gain to .9.[188] In his 1975 statement concerning the goals and achievements of the program, the director notes that with the exception of one student, who only achieved 65% of reading objectives, students mastered at least 80% of the objectives contained in the next highest test above their instructional level when they entered the program.[189]

Attendance rates also improve at the school. Eighty-one percent of the students have lower absenteeism rates at Sweet Street—the average student attends 2 days more a month than previously.[190]

The principal problems confronting the program in 1976 were its location as a school-within-a-school (SWAS) and uncertainty over future funding. While being a SWAS may offer certain advantages to the

alternative program, in the sense that the alternative has access to the greater resources (e.g., library and gym) of the host school, the Sweet Street staff thought that the social work and psychological services of the school, upon which they were totally dependent, were inadequate. A major point of contention was the belief on the part of the host school that the program's students should follow school rules when they were in areas other than their classroom facilities. The Sweet Street staff wanted more autonomy and flexibility to meet the needs of their children. The alternative staff also resented the administration of the school scheduling their recreation periods and assembly hall activities at the same time as the school's first to third graders. This was not only humiliating for the Sweet Street children, who were older, but it also was likely to engender difficulties on the playground—that is, the mixing of the programs' bigger and more aggressive students with the school's younger children.

The staff at the Academy also were concerned about future funding of the program. It was their belief that the existence of the school depended on receipt of ESEA/Title I funding. Without external sources of financial support they were not sure that the Grand Rapids Schools System would maintain their small program for elementary students. These students, albeit disruptive, do not pose as serious a problem as disaffected secondary students. The magnitude of student disruption and dropout at the high school level appears to have occasioned a much more comprehensive and systematic response on the part of school officials in Grand Rapids. At the elementary level, the district seems to have channeled more energy and commitment into programs for the talented.

A final question concerns where these students will go once they complete their primary education at Sweet Street. The staff has given consideration to the possibility of the students attending alternatives like Walbridge. The problem is that the students will then be tracked into another program for disruptive students—a program in which many students have had contact with the law, have dropped out, or are likely to dropout. The dilemma is how to give those students the individualized attention they need, while at the same time not isolating them as the losers of the system.

CAREER STUDY CENTERS—ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA*

Career Study Centers I and II were established for disaffiliated students described as requiring "intensive educational care." Both centers are located in downtown St. Paul in areas considered to be "neutral" or free

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*Information contained in this case study derives from the previously cited 1976 paper, "Options as a Remedy for School Violence," by Kenneth E. Osvold, Director of the Career Study Centers, and from a personal interview and follow-up telephone conversations with him.

from gang warfare. We visited Study Center II, which occupies an impressive two-story (Romanesque) structure with a pillared portico.

Career Study Center I opened in March 1970, after a year of planning by a 40 member committee comprised of teachers, administrators, social service professionals, community leaders, and parents. (This planning committee continued into the operational phase and came to include students). Start-up funds were provided by Title III of ESEA. Career Study Center II began in 1974 as a cooperative undertaking of the school district and five local foundations which contributed $563,611 in start-up funds. Since 1975, the Centers also have received approximately $100,000 per annum from the State Legislature in a special grant. The state funds help compensate for a 15% across-the-board cut in expenditures for all education programs which went into effect in St. Paul, in 1976. That year the total program cost was about $700,000 of which approximately $600,000 represented school district monies. The average per pupil cost of the program is $2,850, as compared with a $1,400 per pupil expenditure in the St. Paul school system. However, the cost of institutionalizing youths in state reformatories—another option—may be $9,000 or more per capita.

The academic schedule of the Career Study Centers is arranged in trimesters. The schedule allows for a 10 hour work week for which the students are recompensed at minimum wage. The core of the academic program consists of reading and mathematics laboratories. Instructional materials used by the Centers include the Educational Development Lab (EDL), the Electric Individualized Approach, Action and Double Action, and the School Mathematics Study Group (SMSG) framework. Other important components of the curriculum are "Basic Skills of Daily Living" (i.e., driver education, job seeking, budgeting, and nutrition) and "Orientation to the Urban World," which consists of field trips made around town in the school's van. A number of classes provide hands-on experience in creating things (sewing, gardening, cooking, welding, sculpting, woodworking). In addition, periods of several hours to a few days or even weeks are designated as independent learning time. The program is ungraded and non-grading.

The aim of the Career Study Centers is to offer options to violence. Providing jobs that pay is one such option. Approximately 200 work placements per center are made annually; and two-thirds of the students stay with the job to which they are assigned. According to the director, when a teenager is expecting a paycheck for some $60 on Friday he is unlikely to get in trouble: "the money can't be spent in jail."

A general rule of thumb was to set up an alternative that would be as little like mainstream schooling as possible. Students and teachers are on a first-name basis. Students are responsible for recording their own attendance. Absentees and truants are "welcomed back" rather than chastized. Overall, the staff is intent upon "emphasizing the positive"—for example, the choice of a name was given careful consideration so as to avoid stigmatizing the youths in their isolation from their peers in

conventional schools. Students are encouraged to attend staff meetings and express their criticisms of the program—for anything that is not working is subject to change. The school staff, furthermore, assumes the role of student advocate in the event of a court hearing or welfare investigation.

Several practices are designed to enhance the students' feelings of self-worth. Both staff and students are encouraged and provided with opportunities to give "a compliment a day." Helping behavior and specific accomplishments are acknowledged by "congrats-o-grams" sent to the students' homes. "Independent learner certificates" are issued to students who have demonstrated their ability to use their time responsibly.

The Career Study Centers minimize the probability of students failing. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to achieve mastery of subject matter. Absentees and dropouts are followed-up by school staff and encouraged to return.

The school provides guidelines for reasonable behavior without placing undue emphasis on discipline. The rules are (1) come to school, (2) exercise "reasonable" behavior, (3) learn something every day. The staff does expect students to be on time to class—especially as punctuality is one of the coping behaviors the teachers wish to inculcate. The staff believes that when a school's learning environment is attractive to students discipline problems will be of little consequence. The staff tolerates smoking and other behaviors which would be punished in conventional schools. Generally, the administration and teachers follow a "quiet, no hassle approach."

There is a high staff-student ratio in the Centers. For example, the staff of Career Study Center II, in 1976, consisted of 7 certificated teachers, 2 job-coordinators, 1 counselor, 1 social worker, 1 assistant principal, a half-time nurse, a half-time principal (whose responsibilities were divided equally between the two Career Study Centers), and 4 noncertificated assistants who helped with the skills laboratories, job placement, and physical recreation. Three of the staff were members of minorities.

The students who attend the Career Study Centers are referred by the Pupil Problems Committee in their home school. Each high school in the district has five slots in one of the centers. No student, it should be noted, is forced to attend the alternative program. Students decide if they want to go to a Career Study Center, and when they want to leave.

Each Center can accommodate, at any one time, approximately 150 students. The student population is between 30% and 40% minority—in a city with minority population of less than 15%. About one-third of the students are female. The students are largely from one parent or foster homes; some are unofficial independent minors. They are usually on the rosters of one or more social or community agencies. They are overage

in grade, crippled in their basic skills, chronic absentees. Many have trouble with the law.

Although their personalities are described as explosive and rebellious, the director is quick to point out that these attributes are often expressed as creativity. The director believes that many of the students can be characterized as "divergent-mode thinkers." He describes the students as being casual and generous with one another.

Concerning program outcomes, the staff of the Career Study Centers have gathered the following data: with regard to job placement, approximately 60% of the students work 75% of their potential hours. Workplace supervisors and job-coordinators fromthe Centers consider two-thirds of the students to have "functioned quite well or very well." School attendance improves markedly: on the average, students nearly double the number of days they attend school. The average daily attendance ranges from 70 to 85%. Students also register substantial gains in academic achievement. For every month of school attendance, students tend to improve two months in reading grade level. Retention rates are very favorable. Over 80% of the students admitted to the program are enrolled on the last day of the academic year; less than 5% quit school. Concerning the long-term outcomes of the program, a 1973 follow-up study of 103 graduates from Career Study Center I revealed that 36% were working, 7% were in the armed forces, 11% were parenting, 14% were unemployed, 1% were incarcerated, 9% were not located, 22% were continuing their schooling.

The director maintains that the program attributes responsible for whatever success the centers have are these: small size; an ungraded and non-grading approach to imparting subject matter; a positive, non-punitive approach to discipline; and the "voluntary nature" of admission to the alternative. To this list of positive attributes, we would add effective leadership provided by a director with a very well articulated philosophy embracing the causes of and educational responses to school violence.

A final consideration is that the program has been able to obtain a substantial amount of support from the local business community. Over half the job placements have been funded by private employers. According to the director, however, the future of the program still depends on a stable state-wide funding program for alternatives for dropouts that has yet not been established.

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